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The New England Theology

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THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

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INTRODUCTION.

In order to discuss intelligently the peculiar form which the Calvinistic Theology assumed in America, and to which it later developed, it obviously becomes necessary to set up a standard by which the American form of Calvinism is to be judged. It is the object of this paper to show, after a fashion, to what extent the theologians of New England of the 17th and 18th centuries deviated from Old Calvinism. For this purpose we must dwell briefly on the work of the Reformer, John Calvin, and on the chief tenets of the Calvinistic or Reformed Theology. In respect to John Calvin's place in the work of the Reformation, probably the line of least resistance for the potential Lutheran theologian would be, to set up a contrast between Calvin and Luther. We shall proceed to do that.

Our study of the history of the Reformation was decidedly one-sided, tho not altogether without reason. Sixteenth century Church History is probably one of the most interesting fields into which the historian can direct his efforts, and to pick out any one portion of this century or to dwell on one viewpoint, say for example, the development of the Reformation in England, France, Germany, or Switzerland -- to grasp firmly the situation in any one of these countries requires years of hard study. So then it is perfectly natural for Lutherans in their study of the Reformation, to place Luther very much in the limelight, in the first place, because historians must grant him this position over all his fellow reformers, and in the second place, because he placed the true visible church at least, back on the firm foundation of Holy Scripture on which we as Lutherans stand today.

But the name of John Calvin certainly dare not be submerged; nor is it anyone's intention to do that. Luther and Calvin, it seems to me,

represent different trends of thought in the Reformation. Luther was a man of action and movement, but above all, a man of childlike faith and confidence in the inerrancy of Holy Scripture. Calvin, on the other hand, was actuated chiefly by his mania for policy and organization. The fact that he did not possess the same simplicity of faith that was Luther's treasured possession, can very readily be ascribed to the peculiar make-up of Calvin's mind. There is no doubt that he was a brilliant logician -- exceeding Luther in this respect -- with his mind keenly trained to pounce upon the slightest apparent fallacy in the reasoning of any argument. His peculiar form of the doctrine of predestination and his persistent refusal to view this doctrine in any other light than that of cold reason, are the logical result of his training and trend of mind.

As was stated a moment ago, Calvin was primarily the legislator, the master-mind, thru whose efforts the "Gallic Reform movement was consolidated into a distinctive spiritual power, and a lasting social result imparted to it." (a). After spending portions of his youth at Noyon, in Picardy, in Paris, Orleans, Bourges (b), back in Paris, in Basle, he finally in the summer of 1536 arrived at Geneva, where he began his work as Reformer in earnest, and where he later set up his so-called church-state, ruled by him with an iron hand. A modern author describes the effects of his work as follows:

> "From this great man proceeds a whole well of ideas which still live, tho the doctrines which were so living to him and his followers, the strict dogmas upon which they evolved their mighty system of warped theology, have faded from the modern mind. If today your non-Catholic conceives of the material, and, more latterly, the spiritual processes as inevitable, if he inclines to despair, if he is tempted by the latest fad of the 'sub-conscious' which man fights in vain, the savour of Calvin is in it all." (c).

(a) Tulloch, Leaders of the Reformation, p.179.
(b) Where he first became imbued with the study of Theology.
(c) Hilaire Belloc, How the Reformation Happened, PP. 122-3.

This little quotation rather nicely sets forth the object of this paper. To put the thing in rough Homiletical form, let us say that we will discuss in the first place, the "strict dogmas" on which Calvin based his system of theology, and in the second place, to what extent they have "faded from the modern mind". The latter means the modern mind in America. The second part will, of course, completely outshadow the first in length, the first being merely the standard which we said would necessarily have to be set up. For this purpose, we shall take the the "Institutes of the Christian Religion" and cull out of this system six major doctrines which bear a special relation to Calvinism in America, to wit, the Sovereignty of God, Anthropology, Christology, Predestination, The Doctrine of the Church, and the Sacraments. Let us be brief and to the point.

As for the Sovereignty of God, Calvin states that God is not to be looked upon as a kind father up there in heaven idly beholding our many transactions. No, He is the absolute ruler and governor of the Universe, who "rules those over whom he presides by fixed decrees." (d). Thus he not only operates the universe by certain laws, but governs and decrees everything we do, yea more, ordains and decrees all special events that are constantly taking place. Yet Calvin resolutely objects to the application of the term, fatalism, to his theology. He speaks for himself:--

> "For we do not, with the Stoics, imagine a necessity arising from the perpetual concatenation and intricate series of causes, contained in nature; but we make God the Arbiter and Governor of all things, who in His own wisdom hath from the remotest eternity decreed what we should do, and now by his own power executes what he hath decreed." (e)

We ask at once, whether this doesn't let anything to chance or accident Calvin replies that there words are properly heathenish and should not be brought to the attention of the pious, since it is impossible that anything can happen independently of the ordination of God. This, we notice, excludes all action of the human will. Precisely, says Calvin. The will of man is

(d) Institutes Vol. I, p. 215.
(e) Ibid. Vol. I p. 220.

completely subjugated to the decrees of Almighty God. And this leads us into the doctrine of Anthropology where we come to a discussion of Original Sin and the Freedom of the Will.

I do not believe it necessary to attempt an exhaustive treatment of the subject, man's original state, nor of the considerations which led man to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Neither is it necessary to spend much time on Calvin's notion of Original Sin. To my mind, he is thoroly Scriptural on this point. Here is his definition of Original Sin:--

> "Original Sin appears to be an hereditary depravity and corruption of our nature, diffused thru all the parts of the soul; rendering us obnoxious to the Divine wrath, and producing in us those works which the Scripture calls 'works of the Flesh'". (f).

Calvin vigorously rejects all Pelagianism, calling the denial of this definition of Original Sin "an instance of consummate impudence." (g). Nothing to argue about there. Let us see what he has to say about Free Will, which forms such an essential part of the discussion of all New England theologians.

After a rather lengthy discourse of some ten pages on the proper place of human reason in the Universe, and of the proper appreciation which men should have of the talents which God has given them, Calvin spends the second half of his chapter on Free Will showing just what human reason cannot do in the matter of spiritual wisdom. His subject is presented quite ably. He speaks of three points of spiritual wisdom: "To know God, his paternal favor towards us on which depends our salvation, and the method of regulating our lives according to the rule of the law." (h). As for the first two, the "most sagacious of mankind are blinder than moles." All the attempts that men have made to know God have resulted in hopeless confusion. Calvin does not attempt to prove this inability of man to understand God by discursive reasoning, but he amply proves it from Scripture, citing numerous passages to show the totality of our blindness. He again rejects the Pelagian error that God

(f) Ibid. Vol.I p.266. (g) Ibid. Vol.I, p263. (h) Ibid. Vol.I,p.291.

assists us by directing our understanding, in no uncertain terms when he quotes Ps. 119,18, where David asks that "his eyes might be opened to consider the mysteries of the Law." Thus it is not sufficient that the sun shines on man, but in order to appreciate it fully, his eyes must be opened by the "Father of Lights". (i). Now in regard to the third point, namely, the knowledge of works of righteousness, natural man again has no ability whatever to live up to the standard of the law, even tho St. Paul says that, since man has the law written in his heart, he ought to know how he should live. But the point is, this law was not written in his heart so that he might know and do the works which he should do, but that all men might be rendered inexcusable Their condemnation is to be just. We note that even the brutes desire to be happy and that they pursue every agreeable appearance which comes to their senses. But, says Calvin,

> "man neither rationally chooses as the object of his pursuit that which is truly good for him, according to the excellence of his immortal nature, nor takes the advice of reason, nor duly exerts his understanding; but without reason, without reflection, follows his natural inclination, like the herds of the field." (j).

In matters of spiritual wisdom, then, man has completely lost the ability which he possessed before the Fall. On the other hand, in the matter of sinning there is in man a co-action of necessity and freedom, for man does sin voluntarily. The fact that man sins of his own free will we can readily understand, but when we say that man is driven to sin by necessity, we run against a snag. The question at once presents itself: Doesn't that make God the author of sin? Calvin says, No, since it was man's free will that he sinned in the first place and now he is only bearing the fruit of his transgression of the divine command. Furthermore, we must remember that God's object in permitting sin, now that it is here, is not to damn, but that his grace might abound. But if man does happen to choose anything that is for his good, it is the Spirit of God that works this in him. In no wise can he choose the good for himself, not even in external things, much less in spiritual.

(i) James 1,17; (j) Institutes Vol.I p. 301.

Now if our case is so utterly hopeless, how are we saved? We, of course, know that Predestination forms the central part of Reformed theology, but surely God will not arbitrarily pick out certain individuals whom He would perhaps like to live with to all eternity, and then ask these to join Him in heaven. No, we are not quite ready for this doctrine; we have man in a sorry and hopeless plight. He cannot get himself out of his predicament. There must be another way. There is, and this method which we shall interpret in the light of Calvinistic theology, paves the way for Calvin's doctrine of Election. So we here present a brief analysis of Calvin's chapter on the Redemptive work of Christ.

The question to be answered is this: How did Christ obtain salvation for us? Here Calvin expresses his agreement with such passages of Scripture which ascribe the work of redemption to Christ's whole course of obedience, namely, the fact that he assumed the human nature, lived here upon earth fulfilling in every detail the Law of God, and finally, according to the prophecies of the Old Testament, suffered, died, was buried, and raised on the third day, all done as an "atoning sacrifice for our sins." (k). As a matter of fact, Scripture is so clear on this point, that even Calvin, who always regarded his reason of such high value in determining the mysteries of the Word of God, confessed his entire agreement to this feature of the atoning work of Christ. He goes into considerable detail describing the exact expiatory nature of Christ's death:--

> "Had he been assassinated by robbers, or murdered in a popular tumult, in such a death there would have been no appearance of satisfaction" (l).

It was necessary that he be "numbered with the transgressors" (m), since, bearing the sin and guilt of the entire world, he was indeed a criminal of the first water. These facts are plain; but when it comes to a discussion of Christ's person, the communication of attributes, and so on, there Calvin

(k) Is. 53,10. (m) Mark 15,28.
(l) Institutes, Vol. I, p.546.
(

becomes entangled in the meshes of his own reason, and we find that he maintains that the communion of the two natures in Christ is only a figurative one; that the communication of attributes is only nominal; that Christ was humiliated and exalted according to both natures; and other such false opinions which are not the result of a childlike faith in the revelation which God has given us. As for the other phases of the redemptive work, I find them Scriptural, except the descent into hell, which Calvin interprets as an actual descent for the purpose of suffering the tortures of hell, not taking into account the fact that this had already occurred on the Cross when the Saviour cried out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Furthermore, as to the Resurrection, Calvin does not admit that Christ raised himself by his own power, but that God raised Him up. Of course, he means according to his human nature. But this is the aforementioned denial of the communication of attributes.

As we have already mentioned, Calvin rejects with great zeal and earnestness all forms of Pelagianism in applying the merit of Christ's work to ourselves. It can't be done! While the Reformed Church absolutely insists on the fact that we are saved by grace alone, nevertheless they here fall into their most serious error, namely that the grace of God is restricted alone to the Elect. Calvin's peculiar form of the doctrine of Election is the most glaring instance of the human mind's futile efforts to penetrate the realms of the unknown or the unrevealed. In the face of innumerable passages of Holy Writ which proclaim the universalis gratia, we still find that the Institutes devotes a special section (n) to the doctrine of Predestination, showing that this is the decree of God by which he has determined what is to become of every creature. "The Lord did not choose you because you were many in number ------- but because He loved you ----" (o). This then is the first degree of Election: Love is the cause of Israel's protection. By no means

(n) Institutes, Vol. III, pp. 21-24.
(o) Deut. 7,7-8.

are works permitted to play the slightest part or bear the least influence in our election. If the Reformed Church teaches anything, it is this, that the grace of God is absolutely irresistible. Now this makes election altogether independent of faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ. Exactly! It is an absolute decree, and is done without regard for the work of the Saviour. The elect, who alone have faith, can never lose it completely, tho they sin ever so grossly. But, we ask, why are some rejected? Calvin replies that God is bound by no laws, but that he has passed an absolute decree condemning the reprobate to sin and perdition. That is the hideous nature of this doctrine. Instead of being an assurance and a comfort to the Christian, it rather drives him into despair.

We pass on to the Doctrine of the Church and use Calvin's words to show the need and the duty of the Church:--

> "As our ignorance and slothfulness, and, I may add, the vanity of our minds, require external aids, in order to the production of faith in our hearts, and its increase and progressive advance even to its completion, God hath provided such aids in compassion to our infirmity; and that the preaching of the Gospel might be maintained, he hath deposited this treasure with the Church." (p).

We do not find more than one church for the simple reason that Christ is the Head of the True Church, and as there is only one body for one head, so we have only one true church. In consequence, this church must be catholic, universal, for, "where two or three are gathered together in my name", says Jesus, "there am I in the midst of them." (q). This church is found "wherever we find the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the Sacraments administered according to the institution of Christ." (r). To put the thing in a few words: The true church is the totality of the elect. This church is governed by four divinely appointed offices, to wit, pastors, teachers, elders, deacons. The pastors are to preach, teach, and exercise Christian discipline; while the teachers and elders cooperate with them in the

(p) Institutes, Vol. III, p.5.
(q) Matth. 18,20.
(r) Institutes, Vol.III, p. 18.

in the government of the church. The deacons are entrusted with the care of the poor.

When it comes to matters of doctrine, Calvin's church at Geneva was supreme; but in all civil matters the church handed offenders over to the government for punishment. This was Calvin's Utopia: A Church-State. And he arrogated to himself almost unlimited power in order to put his plans for an ideal theocracy into successful operation. He believed absolutely that the Word of God is supreme, and that it was the duty of the Church and the State to carry out the divine will. This plan worked out only in Geneva and only as long as Calvin was there to dominate the situation with his personality. The only doctrine that has been carried over into the modern Reformed Church probably as completely as possible, both in theory and in practise, is that of the Sacraments, Baptism, and Lord's Supper.

In the first place, Calvin defines a Sacrament as:--

> "an outward sign by which the Lord seals in our consciences the promise of his good will toward us, to support the weakness of our faith, and we on our part testify our piety toward him, in his presence and that of the angels, as well as before men." (s).

Baptism is the seal of a covenant. It signifies the beginning of a new life, but that again only for the elect. It testifies the forgiveness of sins; not as we believe an actual washing away of sins, but only an assurance that God has forgiven the sins of the baptized, provided he belongs to the elect. In this connection Calvin rejects the error that Baptism forgives only the sins of the past and that acts of Penance are necessary to obliterate any sins that might be committed after Baptism. Instead he says:--

> "It is a sign of initiation, by which we are admitted into the society of the church, in order that being incorporated into Christ, we may be numbered among the children of God." (t).

In his conception of the Lord's Supper, Calvin did teach the Real Presence of Christ, but that this presence was a spiritual one in which the

(s) Institutes, Vol. III, p1298.
(t) Ibid. Vol. III, p. 326.

believer received spiritually but in a real way the body and blood of Christ. Here we have a wide gulf between Calvin and Luther, the latter insisting on a real bodily presence of Christ in, with, and under the bread and wine. Calvin could not admit this point without surrendering his conception of the local presence of Christ at the right hand of God in heaven. Another error which Calvin held in the Lord's Supper as well as in Baptism, was this, that only the believer received the benefits thru faith. Instead of teaching, then, that the unbeliever eats and drinks to his destruction, the partaking of the Lord's Supper for such a person, has no effect wither way.

Here we have in brief the major doctrines of Calvinistic Theology. After numerous controversies and discussion, they were set in the form of canons and accepted by the Synod of Dort, which convened in the years 1618-19. The five canons: Absolute Predestination, Limited Atonement, Total Depravity and Absolute Inability of man, Irresistible grace, and the Perseverance of Saints, which were accepted by this Synod, all hinge on the great doctrine of Election, which in Holy Scripture occupies a position subordinate to Justification by Faith and Universal Grace, but which in Calvinistic Theology has been elevated to a supreme position, lending a shadowy lustre to the great doctrines of Universalis Gratia and Sola Gratia, which God intended for a comfort to every sinner.

These Canons of Dort were adopted with some considerations in other countries of Europe and America. The stages of development thru which this theology passed in America in the subject of this paper. It might be said at the outset that the big question at issue among the New England theologians was the Ability and Inability of man in spiritual matters. To trace the development of the doctrine of Free Will and also the doctrine of Atonement in America is the problem with which this paper propeses to deal. Such doctrines as bear an intimate relation with this will necessarily be discussed; but the primary purpose -- to show how the strict doctrine of Necessity of early New England theologians in the early 18th century

gradually developed into one of absolute Free Will and Perfectionism in the late 19th Century-- will always be borne in mind.

NEW ENGLAND SETTLERS STRICTLY CALVINISTIC.

From our recollection of early American history, the subject of this section is not at all surprising. Indeed the rigidity of Calvin's predestinarian views would tend to make any community, adhering to these principles, zealous of their rights as the elect of God, and intolerant of anything that savored of heresy or error. Furthermore, the Puritans had certainly passed thru harrowing experiences. If we but recollect their efforts at purifying the Church of England, their subsequent expulsion to Holland, and finally that trying experience of leaving home forever to seek peace on soils unknown, and there establish a church which would permit them to worship God as they had been taught -- if we take all these facts into consideration, then we might realize and appreciate the intolerant attitude which the Puritans of America took towards creed which were out of harmony with their particular creed, which to them was a cherished possession.

So then we find that the Boston Synod of 1680 adopted the Savoy Confession, which was the confession of the Congregationalists. We remember that the Congregational church body was formed in England under the leadership of Barrowe and Browne, who broke away from the Established Church because of abuses practised by the latter body. They were an element of the so-called Puritans. The adoption of the Savoy Confession (u) by the Boston Synod was reiterated by the Saybrook Synod in Connecticutt in 1708, thus making our colonists Congregationalists, which is the same as Calvinists.

But already in the early American theology we have a change of thought, and this produced not by changing condition in the colonies themselves, but -- in harmony with the old adage: Like father, like son -- a changing trend of

(u) Essentially the same as the Westminster Creed.

thought in the mother country, bringing its influence to bear on the thinking of American minds. This influence was that of Arminian theology which was rapidly spreading among the Dissenters as well as the Churchmen of England. Briefly, Arminian theology involved these five points: 1) Conditional Election; 2) Universal salvation; 3) Salvation by grace; 4) Grace not irrisistible; 5) To fall from grace is possible. Naturally, the adoption of any of these points would involve a tremendous change in the thought of New England theologians. The writings of such men as Whitby, John Taylor, and Dr. Samuel Clark were widely read. A reaction was inevitable. And we have it in the "Great Awakening" of 1740 which was accompanied by an open attack on Arminianism. It seems almost natural for a controversy to end in a compromise. To be sure, this is not always the case, as is attested by the fact that our church today still maintains a quia subscription to the Confessions, in spite of the almost innumerable battles and wars it has been forced to fight in the past centuries. But generally speaking, a compromise is usually the result of a great controversy. So here in Arminian Calvinism. We do not mean to say that the immediate resultof the Arminian controversy was that modified Calvinism, which we know in America today. By no means! While we admit the possibility of radical changes coming about suddenly in the organization of a business firm, for example, we on the other hand, refute the notion that a change of thought takes place in a night. Were this so, then this paper would be almost finished. Such a process as one of development over a period of months and years. And here in the Arminian controversy we have the beginnings of our New England Theology, which is modified Calvinism. The man who first comes up for discussion did not consciously modify the theology of Calvin. That is natural. Being the first to partake in the battle, he was filled with the zeal of maintaining those principles which he had been taught to believe were right. As time goes on, and the principles of both parties received more thoro attention and investigation by all concerned, the better qualities of each side of the question were naturally

considered -- unconsciously, perhaps, but nevertheless really --and we soon have an amalgamation of the two emerging from the mass. However, that process is coming. Now we must deal with

JONATHAN EDWARDS AND THE ARMINIAN THEOLOGY. ---- Chapter 1.

Jonathan Edwards was, I suppose, the greatest of New England theologians, tho by no means do we wish to create the impression that other men of this period must necessarily pale into insignificance. They do not. But for native genius and brilliance of intellect, Edwards position must be regarded as unique. His views have long since received the name, Edwardean, and the opinions of other men of this age are constantly viewed in reference to those of Jonathan Edwards.

On the 5th of October, 1703, Edwards first saw the light of day in East Windsor, Conn. He was the son of Pastor Timothy Edwards of East Windsor, and the grandson of the famed Pastor Solomon Stoddard of Northhampton, Mass. Not only his training, but his environment and inherited qualities were those of the New England Puritan. Raised in this atmosphere of simplicity, sincerity and spirituality, we have a right to expect his dominant quality to be -- spirituality. He was a youngster of unusually excellent gifts. Witness, for example, such achievements as this: At the age of 12 he wrote a remarkable essay on the habits of the flying spider; at 14 he read and understood Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding; at 17 he graduated from Yale as Valedictorian of his class; and at this time he was already known to have a well formulated philosophy. Time does not permit us to dwell on the youth of this remarkable career. We must pass on th the year 1729 when he succeeded his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, as pastor of the church at Northhampton.

What was the situation in New England at this time? We have already heard that Arminian thought was beginning to force its influence upon the thought of the colonists. Since to every action there is an opposite and equal reaction, we have the famous Revival movements of the 18th century as

a natural expression of the opposition to Arminianism. People began to feel the want of a more life-like religion, i.e., they wanted a more positive way in which they could express their religious experiences. Naturally, Revivals answered the call, since their prime object is to appeal to the emotions, thus making people believe that they are experiencing an actual conversion. Emphasis is placed on the necessity of conversion in order to obtain salvation, upon faith as the sole ground of our justification, upon punishment due to unforgiven sin, upon the justice of God in the damnation of unrepentant sinners.

Just at the beginning of this period, Edwards began his career in Northampton, as a strong advocate of the Revival movement. The first few years of his ministry were somewhat barren as far as the number of conversion made is concerned. A spirit of indifference and carelessness toward spiritual matters dominated especially the younger people. But the simplicity and sincerity of Edwards in his dealings with the members of his parish could not fail to have their effect. So after six years of work, we find that the entire community was aroused to the most intense religious zeal and interest. Something like 300 conversion were reported to have been made in a half year. This remarkable zeal continued to spread like fire thruout New England and by 1740 we have practically all the theologians and leading pastors lined up either for or against Revivals. That brings into evidence the so-called "Liberal Theology" (v) and its counter-movement, known as the "New Divinity" (w). Since the latter forms the basic part of our discussion, we will discuss the contribution of Jonathan Edwards to this form of theology. His biggest work is, no doubt, the essay on the Freedom of the Will, which form an open attack on Arminianism.

(v) Began as a revolt from certain features of Old Calvinism, became confirmed in the spirit of dissent by the Great Awakening, and diverging ever more widely from the Old Orthodoxy developed ultimately into Unitarianism and separated from the Congregational Church.

(w) This is the New England Theology, or the modified Calvinism in America.

As has already been stated, Edwards read and understood John Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding at the age of 14. With such a turn of mind it is quite natural that his own writings should possess all the earmarks of philosophical speculations and distinctions. His own essay on the Freedom of the Will might be said to be a reworking of Locke in order to suit the conditions of the time and the object for which he was writing. The essay begins with a series of definitions, in which the following terms are accurately defined: Necessity (natural and moral), Inability (natural and moral), Impossibility, Irresistibility, Liberty, and Moral Agency. His definition of Liberty, for example, is the power to do as one wishes without considering the causes (x). Liberty is not to be identified with the Will but it is the agent, who is possessed of the Will. The Arminians, on the other hand, will tell us that the Will has its own power to determine its acts, identifying Liberty and Will. The mind, previous to the act of volition, is altogether indifferent. There is no Necessity whatever in any act of the Will. This, Edwards claims, is absolutely inconsistent. Does the Will have self-determining power? If the will chooses its own acts, then the Will must be chosen by another Will that chooses and so on, ad infinitum. In a series of Will one is determined by the other, so none of them are free. Just as in a chain, one link is moved by the other, motion being the determining factor, so also in the matter of the Will.

In this way Edwards continues to build up his extreme notion of Necessity in every act of the human Will, be that spiritual, secular, or civil. Ruthlessly holding up every argument for indifference in actions which the Arminians present, to the searchlight of cold logic and reason, he attempts to reduce them to absurdity. He seems to hold the view that there are only two alternatives: Either volitions and actions are necessary, or, being at liberty, all our acts will be unreasonable and without the guidance of the

(x) External motives or bias.

Understanding. It seems to me, that this is merely a misapplication of the Law of Excluded Middle.

Now to carry this discussion to the issue involved, namely, the introduction of sin into the world. Consistent with Edwards' doctrine of Necessity we would be justified in saying that by a series of causes logically following each other, sin had to enter this world. Whether he makes God the author of sin is hard to determine. That would seem to be the logical result, tho he doesn't admit it. The Arminians, on the other hand, bring the accusation that this doctrine frees man of all blame. They ascribe to man an absolute free will in sinning, and (which is unscriptural) an absolute free will in choosing a life of holiness, whereby we earn salvation. As for the view of Edwards, we grant that our sin is necessary, but Adam's was not. Edwards displays both an inconsistency and an uncanny power of drawing fine distinctions when he refuses to admit that God is the author of sin. He claims that the good choice of moral agents is one of Necessity, but the evil choice lies in the nature of things. He calls the latter attitude passive power. That is Edwards's answer to the question, Where did sin come from? I believe the answer lies in this: Since sin is a reality that lies in the realm of experience, it is not the field for reason and speculation. And since experience depends on revelation, we can only know what has been revealed. This mystery has not been revealed. Therefore, it is not for us to try to solve it. Here, I believe, lies the error of Edwards, and all those who later accepted his strict Necessitarianism.

The departure from Old Calvinism which we note in this view is not fundamental but only one of degree, inasmuch as Edwards advocated Predestination in the extreme supralapsarian form. I don't believe that Calvin meant to carry this decree to a period before the Fall of Man as Edwards did. Neither did Calvin introduce the doctrine of Necessity until after the Fall of man. But we cannot be too hasty in condemning Edwards altogether. We must remember

that in any debate a man will always seek the extremes in order to prove his point. Edwards fought tooth and nail to keep the ideals of Old Calvinism from falling into disintegration. He must, then, be looked upon as the champion of Calvinism at a time when the theology was in grave danger of losing its individualsty.

Intimately associated with the doctrine of Free Will is that of Original Sin, and we find that early in the controversy it is attacked by opponents of Edwards. When, for example, Dr. John Taylor brings in the suggestion that man even today is born void of all knowledge, possessing only sensual appetites which lead us into temptation; that these appetites must be properly trained to serve our good, and for this purpose Christ came into the world, namely to serve as a model in the proper use of these sensual appetites; when notions of this kind were presented, Edwards again came to the rescue with his brilliant Defense of the Doctrine of Original Sin. What in his mind is really the essence of Original Sin? In the first place, he maintains and amply proves the universal depravity of mankind, and also shows that the sin of Adam is imputed to all because they have committed it in him. The latter was a refutation of Taylor's notion that the imputation of Adam's on all men was not in harmony with the goodness and justice of God. By insisting that all men sinned in Adam, Edwards brings to New England Theology its first distinguishing feature, namely, that all sin is voluntary. He also introduced the idea that this depravity in man was consistent with an established order in nature, which follows these stages: Evil constitution; birth of men without the Spirit; positive consent to Adam's sin; and the charge of guilt. In answer to the question, how does Adam connect with this result, we note a point of difference between Edwards and Calvin. Heredity will answer the question as far as the body is concerned. But what about the soul? Here Edwards introduces the idea of continued creation, which toggther with the four stages of his divine constitution, form the basis of his explanation.

In our consideration of the work of Christ in taking the guilt of this sin from us, we are tempted to say that Edwards had little regard for the great work of Redemption, at least from a Scriptural point of view. Here is the idea: Anyone who adopts a supralapsarian view of Predestination will be forced to admit (and Edwards, true to Calvinism, does admit it) that the decree of God is absolute, and not relative, depending on faith in Christ. If then a man is saved by decree without Christ, why did the latter die? Well, he did anyway, and Edwards looks upon this in the following way. In the first place, as Intercessor, Christ entered fully into the mind of the offending party, displaying a feeling of absolute sympathy. The death of Christ was merely Christ's expression of this sympathy, whereby he showed that he fully understood what guilt involves. The substitution of Christ was prompted wholly by his love for the world, and by his voluntary submission into death, he signified his absolute approval of the righteousness of the law. It is perfectly within the province of God's justice to condemn sinners. This makes the entire work of Christ merely one which proves to the reprobate that their condemnation is just.

Now we might ask, what was the result of Edwards' controversy with the Arminians? Were his followers many or did it have the opposite effect? At first, of course, the men who built on the foundation laid by Edwards were a small minority. I do not believe that anyone adopted his views absolutely. In the case of all succeeding representatives who accepted his views in the main, we notice the beginnings of a struggle to get away from the Necessitarian views of their leader, a struggle which broadens and grows as time goes on until, developing finally into an absolute Freedom of the Will and Perfectionism.

The Arminians, on the other hand, were rather effectively submerged. True, they struggled on for a period of some years, but without holding to any definite principles, they gradually developed into the later Unitarian

movement, tho we have its representatives among the Methodists and Baptists today.

CHAPTER 2 -- REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY.

JOSEPH BELLAMY was born in Cheshire, Conn. on the 20th of Feb.,1719. After graduating from Yale, and studying theology under Jonathan Edwards for a short time, he was licensed to preach, and from 1740 to 1790 served the Congregational Church at Bethlehem, Conn. He exerted a wide influence on the theological thought of this period, not only by his publications, but chiefly by a school which he conducted for the training of clergymen, sending scores of preachers to all parts of New England, as well as some of the middle western States.

The work of Bellamy with which we will be chiefly concerned is the "True Religion Delineated", in which he set forth his system of theology. First, however, it might be of interest to spend a moment looking into a movement which had already been vigorously attacked by Edwards, and which was attacked with equal vigor by Bellamy. This movement resulted in what we know as the Half-Way Covenant. The name suggests a compromise. That is precisely what it is. About the middle of the 17th century, trouble arose in the colony concerning the status of children of original church members. The question was this: Should children of original church members who had been baptized be admitted into church membership. Two conventions -- one of ministers in Boston in 1657, another a general synod of the churches of Massachusetts in 1662 -- agreed on the following compromise: Those who had become members in childhood by virtue of their parent's status could not later on be admitted to the Lord's Table, nor could they vote on ecclesiastical issues, unless they proved themselves fit; but they could bring their children to Baptism and hand on to them the same degree of membership which they had received. In spite of the opposition of Edwards and Bellamy, this was not abolished until the early years of the 19th century.

But let us briefly analyze the True Religion Delineated, not a thorogoing analysis, for if that policy were adopted in the remaining works to be considered, this paper would grow entirely too massive -- in weight, I mean. From now on, it is the writer's intention to discuss only that phase of subsequent systems which actually present something new to the field of New England Theology. In Bellamy's system we notice an entirely new trend of thought beginning to shape itself. In the main, we find him in agreement with Edwards, but in his presentation of the "governmental theory" of atonement, we have something new to deal with. It is not new to the history of doctrine, since the theory was first propounded by a learned jurist of Holland, Hugo Grotius, in 1617. The theory explains the atonement as a governmental necessity, and makes God not the offended party but the supreme "Ruler". To put it in the words of F.H. Foster:--

> "As long as the divine justice was conceived as a single unrelated attribute, and theologians talked of the necessity of the satisfaction of justice by the sacrifice of Christ, the position that God acted as the offended party was the logical one. But as soon as God is conceived of as acting always from love, and his justice becomes modified both in what it demands and in the reason for its infliction by this conception, then God must act in the matter of punishment from general motives, dictated by love, or he must act as a general person, and in this case, as the divine governor." (y).

By adopting this theory Bellamy conceives God as being desirous of our happiness and averse to our misery, in an exact proportion to the real nature of the things themselves. Here are Bellamy's words fully expressing the new theory:--

> "To the end that a way might be opened for him to put his designs of mercy in execution, consistently with himself, consitently with the honor of his holiness and justice, law and government, and sacred authority, something must be done by him in a public manner, as it were, in the sight of all the world, whereby his infinite hatred of sin, and unchangeable resolution to punish it, might be as effectually manifested as if he had damned the whole world." (z).

Another new note which Bellamy struck was the doctrine of general atonement, departing very decidedly from the Old Calvinism, which insisted that grace was only for the elect. He insisted that Christ died for all those

(y) Foster, Hist. of the N.E. Theology, p.114.
(z) Works, Vol. II, p.267.

who will repent and believe. This view of atonement is that which was later adopted by New England Theology as the official expression of the view of these theologians on this question.

Now there is one other point in which Bellamy helped bring about a change in thought. We have listened to Edwards' discussion on the question of Original Sin, and the manner in which he side-steps the admission that God is the author of sin. In the minds of later theologians, this was rather an unsatisfactory solution of the problem; and beginning with Bellamy, we have the notion that God did not decree sin but He permitted it. Now it remains for us to attempt to see the wisdom of God in doing this, and as a result, we have Bellamy's treatise on the Permission of Sin.

The question was this: How could a good God permit sin to enter the world? The discussion which now begins is a long one extending until the controversies of N.W. Taylor and culminating in the later New Haven Theology.

The work of Bellamy is divided into a number of discourses. He shows, in the first place, the fact that God permitted sin to enter the world does not show that he loved it or really wanted man to sin. The fact simply is that he did not hinder it. But the question, whether this is justifiable to the ways of God, must at once be asked. Bellamy proceeds to build up his argument in a manner consistent with reason. He presents a touch of the optimism of Leibnitz, when he takes as his starting point the fact that this is the best possible world. Why? For the simple reason that God had absolute choice of a number of plans before he created the world. Since his judgment is infallible, and since he chose to make the particular world that we now have, therefore, this must be the best possible world. God would do nothing but act in a perfectly reasonable way. He built this world, made man a moral agent and placed him here as a subject of moral government. He was placed under the highest obligations to dedicate himself to the service of his maker. These obligations were revealed, he was placed under a law, and told the

penalty if he disobeyed this law. But man, left to his own action, rebelled, and consequently sinned. This sin God permitted. Is it justifiable? Yes, says Bellamy, God could, of course, have confirmed man in his holiness, but he did not do this, so that man would be led to a proper appreciation of God's goodness.

In other words, Bellamy means to say that "sin is the necessary means to the greatest good". This is the first position taken by New England divinity on this theme. We notice a new note of freedom; "a new intellectual disposition -- the disposition to discuss not merely to refute, but also to learn, and to meet new difficulties by new propositions suited to the day."(a) Even tho these questions: Whether it is true that God introduced sin to emphasize happiness by contrast; whether this doesn't actually make God the author of sin; whether the blessedness which would have been present if sin hadn't come, wouldn't glorify God more than existing evil -- even tho such questions are not thoroly settled, nevertheless, we see that the New England Theology is directing itself toward one of its principle services to the world, the doctrine of Atonement. We hurry on to Samuel Hopkins.

While it might be said of Bellamy that he was a man of very practical nature, in Hopkins we find the intellectual type. His development along these lines was greatly aided by the fact that he escaped the retirement of a country pastorate, and instead served a large congregation at Newport, R.I. for over 30 years. Here in the midst of a busy life, finding opportunities extending in all directions, he was able to perform a large service for the theology of New England. Indeed, his was an invaluable service, inasmuch as he presented to posterity the first complete system of theology which New England produced. This shall, of course, serve as the basis of our discussion.

First, let us get some idea as to the way in which this system was produced. New England at this time was seething with theological discussion.

(a) Foster, p. 128.

Ever since Jonathan Edwards refused to let the Arminians pass by without subjecting them to his searching logic, questions which before had been pondered and probably solved in the solitude of countless studies, were now being thrown into the ring and discussed by almost everyone. After,all, these there is nothing more exhilerating than an open forum discussion of agitated questions and besides, this usually leads to a definite result. So that is the situation here. Before Hopkins published his system in 1793, he passed thru a series of controversies, which began already in 1759. We cannot discuss them in detail, but we do want a few of the main facts.

The issue was that of the coming of sin into the world. Bellamy had discussed it in his Permission of Sin, and now Hopkins took it up by publishing his views in a tract, in which he showed that sin was an advantage to the Universe. Shocking? Indeed it was! But it was only a restatement of the same views Bellamy had expressed but a short time before. This led into his long chapter on the Decrees of God, which will be reviewed in a few moments.

Hopkins soon got into another argument with Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, pastor of the West Church in Boston, on the question of Regeneration. The latter was a substantial Pelagianist and he firmly attacked the prevalent doctrine of Inability, which even now already was being supplanted by its opposite. Joining with him in this setto was the Rev. Jedediah Mills of Ripton, Conn., who aired his Pelagian views in <u>An Inquiry Concerning the State of the Unregenerate under the Gospel</u>. In the same year (1767) the Rev. Moses Hemminway of Wells, Mass. joined the debate with his <u>Seven Sermons on the Obligation ---- of the Unregenerate to labour for the Meat which endureth ---</u>.

The essential point of difference between these men and Hopkins was not the bare doctrines of Inability and Ability. To Hopkins the doctrine of Inability was certainly a paralyzing one and a "refuge of Lies." But the

point was this: Hopkins' opponents were substantial Pelagianists and as such insisted that man's free will extended also to spiritual matters, and that he could of his own free will accept the grace of God and salvation. In which way did Hopkins disagree? Some ten pages of the first volume of his system is devoted to the subject of Regeneration, and the points which he brings out somewhat as follows: Regeneration is an instantaneous act, in which man plays no part whatever. The only true cause id God, who works, not on the Understanding of man, since that has not been corrupted by sin, but on the Will or the heart, which is in all respects totally corrupt. The author takes great pains to cite many Scripture passages proving this last point. In this respect man has no ability whatever. The act of regegeration is an immediate act of the Holy Ghost. For example, in Paul's discussion with Lydia, it was not thru Paul that regeneration was brought about, since she knew not what he was talking about. But the Holy Spirit first enlightened her heart, and then she could understand the apostle. This operation of the Holy Spirit was altogether imperceptible. It was only the effect (her understanding of the words of Paul) that she could experience.

Now we come to a gross error of Hopkins, tho it whows his consistency with the theology of Calvin. He says:--

> "There are indeed promises made to the church that God will pour out his Spirit, and regenerate sinners; but no individual, unconverted sinner can claim this promise, as it is not made to him in particular."(b)

In the previous section the point was well made that this grace of God was altogether undeserved. But that it is at the same time unpromised is decidedly unscriptural, tho it is consistent with the Calvinistic notion of the doctrine of Election.

Now then Hopkins shows that this act of regeneration is not at all inconsistent with Liberty. The grace of God is not irresistible. But after man has been regenerated, he converts himself, a process which Hopkins evidently

(b) System of Theology, Vol.I, p.459.

confuses with sanctification, for he says it continues thru life until death. Here are his words on the nature of freedom in this connection:--

> "Antecedent to regeneration, man acts freely. With great strength of inclination and choice his heart opposes the law of God, and rejects the gospel, seeking himself wholly. And when the instantaneous, immediate energy of the Holy Spirit renews his heart, he turns about, and loves and chooses what he hated before; and exercises as real freedom in his choice and pursuit of that which he opposes and rejected." (c).

On the question of Original Sin, Hopkins is somewhat in agreement with Edwards. He believes that all sin is voluntary, and that the posterity of Adam becomes guilty of his sin by consenting to his sin and by a union of heart to him as a transgressor. Thus he really believes that there is no sin but actual sin. He stoutly maintains that we do not receive the sin of Adam merely as a punishment, while we ourselves are innocent. There is a mysterious connection between Adam and his posterity by which every man consents to his sin. He thus assign two reasons why can be held accountable: First, the fact that our sin is also Adam's doesn't make it less ours; and second, the natural moral depravity is our own.

What about the divine decree in the production of sinful choices? Hopkins replies by saying in a general way that God's decrees are fixed, but with the provision that man's freedom is secured. His decrees are dependent on the agency of man. The time of man's death, for example, is not fixed so absolutely that he will live until then regardless of the life he leads. But the question at issue is this: How could God foreordain evil? This is a decided mystery, which no man can answer. But Hopkins draws the same conclusion as did Bellamy, for he maintains that evil must be necessary for the greatest general good. God always does what is best. Therefore, by permitting sin, he must have felt that mankind would derive some good which they would not have derived otherwise. This is, of course, a rational attempt to explain one of the greatest mysteries in theology. We cannot attempt to enter such profound realms and expect at arrive at a definite conclusion. Yet Hopkins

(c) Ibid. p. 460.

doesn't seem to think it is blasphemous to say that God foreordained sin, in that sense that it was done that good might result. The notion of blasphemy, he says, is only a false association of ideas. There are, for example, many things that decidedly shocked the sensibilites of our forefathers but which do not phase us in the least. The Jews would under no circumstances pronounce the Tetragrammaton, substituting Adonai whenever it occurred. But changing times bring about changing viewpoints. The same is true in the case before us. While it seems shocking to say that God foreordained sin, nevertheless it is not so if we take into consideration that fact that God in his infinite widdom must have foreseen that some good would result.

To prove that God foreordains events in general, Hopkins draws on all sections of Scripture showing that everything we do is in harmony with the divine decrees. The sinful deed of the brethren of Joseph is selling him to Egypt is represented as being ordered by God, no doubt with the intention of shaping the future history of his people. The Prophet Amos says: "Shall there be evil in the city and the Lord hath not done it?" True, in this section, Hopkins says, natural evil is meant, but this is a concomitant of moral evil. We might ask this question: Did God also decree moral evil? The author doesn't attempt to answer. But he does say that this evil was created for some good. If this really is true, doesn't the argument presented in the Book of Romans hold good, to wit, let us sin so that good might result? This argument, Hopkins says, is utterly unreasonable. He says:--

> "That which is in itself, in its own nature, evil, may by God be made the occasion of the greatest good; and this is so far from altering the nature of evil, or making it less an evil, in itself considered, that if this should be the case, and it were possible, the end to be answered by it would be defeated, and there would be no evil, to be the occasion of greatest good. It is indeed a good thing, that evil, both moral and natural, should take place; and the good of which this is the occasion swallows up the evil, and the whole taken together is the most complete, perfectly beautiful, and good system. But this alters not the nature of evil, and it is still an evil, as contrary to all good, and as disagreeable and hateful, in itself considered, and as unconnected with the whole, as if it were not made the occasion of good; but of evil.(d)

(d) Ibid. Vol. I, p. 155.

We are willing to grant that if man were driven to sin by necessity, then he could not be held responsible for his actions; but as we have already seen, Hopkins supplants the doctrine of inability by that of ability, showing that in order to carry out his decrees, God uses the freedom which man possesses. The struggle to arrive at a more perfect freedom of the will continues.

Here we have the first complete system which forms such a vital part of New England Theology. One of the chief distinguishing features, probably, is the recognition of the authority of Scriptures which reduced the influence of later rationalistic theologians to a minimum. The system has incorporated the great ideas of Edwards which already determine its character. On the whole, it is a comprehensive and thoro work, which can be classed with the great systems of the christian world. Despite the fact that its subject is Dogmatic Theology, it is nevertheless very readable and interesting. The fact that these books are being read for the purpose of noting the stages of development in a connected system, no doubt, adds to the interest. And as for representing a certain stage in this development as well as accurately summing up previous views, the system well meets the requirements. As Foster says: "He who will thoroly know the New England Theology must read deeply in the system of Samuel Hopkins." (e).

(e). Foster, p. 186.

Chapter 3 -- THE DEVELOPING SCHOOL.

We have now approached the period of the war of Revolution, and, while it is true that the war itself had little effect on the progress of theological thought in New England, nevertheless, just at the close of America's fight for independence, there occurred in New England a movement which will demand our consideration, since it effected very decidedly the trend of thought in this section of the country. It was the attack of Universalism which forced New England theologians to enter upon a thoro discussion of all eschatological questions, and which at the same time brought to the foreground the governmental theory of atonement, which had already been advocated by Bellamy.

Universalism is the doctrine that all souls will finally be saved and that good will finally triumph universally and permamently. This doctrine had been advocated in its extremest form by a certain James Relly of London. From this man it adopted the name Rellyanism, and it was brought to America by the Rev. John Murray, who came to this country in 1770. It seems as tho Murray did not preach this doctrine in such extreme form in this country, for he does not believe that all men will finally be saved. Here are his views as summarized by Hosea Ballou in the Universalist Quarterly of January 1848.

> "A few are elected to obtain the knowledge of truth in this life, and these go into Paradise immediately at death. But the rest, who die in unbelief, depart into darkness, where they will remain under terrible apprehension of God's wrath until they are enlightened. Their sufferings are neither penal nor disciplinary, but simply the effect of unbelief. Some will believe and will be delivered from their darkness to the intermediate state. At the general judgment, such as have not been previously brought into the truhh will come forth to the resurrection of damnation; and thwa ignorance of God's purpose, they will call on the rocks and mountains to fall on them! Then the judge will make the final separation, dividing the 'sheep' or universal human nature, from the 'goats' which are the fallen angels, and send the latter away into everlasting fire."

This sounds a great deal like the Catholic doctrine of the Purgatory. Whatever it may be, it was a doctrine that was eventually bound to receive the notice of the public. It did not at first, and for that reason the New England

divines did not immediately grapple with the issue. Thus for a short time Murray was permitted to work unmolested. In 1779 he organized the first Universalist church in Gloucester, Mass. The thing grew rapidly and six years later there were a sufficient number of representatives to justify the calling of a convention. The spark that fired the New England pastors into action was a paper entitled Salvation for All Men, issued by Dr. Charles Chauncy, in 1784. This brought forth a strom of protest under the leadership of Jonathan Edwards Jr., who, in the form of Three Sermons on Atonement, hurled an attack on the Murryan doctrine of Universalism. Let us review this work, which as stated above, developed still more the governmental theory of atonement.

According to Eph. 1,11 (f) we are saved "according to the riches of his grace." But this redemption we have in Christ "thru his blood." The text thus tells us two things: 1) We are saved as an exercise of grace; and 2) We are saved by the blood of Christ. The problem confronting Edwards in the development of his theme is this: How can these two parts be harmonized? As an answer, he proposes three questions.

In the first place, he answers in the affirmative the question whether we are forgiven thru the atonement of Christ only. Holy Scripture is altogether clear on this point. Besides, how could an all-wise and good Father consent to the death of his only son, were this not necessary?

The second question, Why is an atonement necessary for the pardon of the sinner, is answered somewhat as follows: Atonement is fully as necessary as punishment would be had there been no atonement. Well, then, why is punishment necessary? For the simple reason, that the authority of the divine law must be maintained. Were people permitted to break the law of God with immunity, would no the authority of God be despised and his

(f) Text for first sermon.

government weakened?

The third question is found in his second sermon. Here it is: Are we, notwithstanding the redemption of Christ, forgiven freely by grace? Here Edwards experiences his greatest difficulty and resorts, first, to an accurate definition of terms. He seeks to define the terms 'justice' and 'grace'. There are three different uses of the term 'justice':

1) Commutative justice -- Proper respecting of another man's property.
2) Distributive justice - In which good conduct is properly rewarded, and bad conduct is punished.
3) General justice ------ Whatever is right, is just; whatever is wrong, is unjust.

Now Edwards explains the term'grace' by showing that it is always opposed to justice. Justice ends where grace begins. Grace, used in the first sense above, is to forgive a man his debt; in the second sense, to treat a man more favorably than he deserves; in the third sense, the two are not opposed, but general justice includes grace, as well as every other virtue in existence.

Now then, for the application. Is the pardon of the sinner, thru the atonement of Christ, an act of justice of of grace? As for the first, it is neither. Commutative justice is not concerned, since we neither owed God any money, nor did Christ pay any for us. As for distributive justice, our pardon is altogether and act of grace. We are even now, as far as our personal conduct is concerned, wholly undeserving of any reward in heaven. So then by being pardoned, we are getting more than we deserve -- grace par excellence. In the third sense, since anythigg is just that is right, therefore, our pardon in this case is an act of justice.

Edwards' third sermon occupies itself with a number of 'reflections', a few of the outstanding of which it might be well to note.

The atonement of Christ does not consist in his active obedience, since this would not support the authority and dignity of the law of God. Again, inrequiring atonement, God does not act from any selfish motives, but purely from a desire to promote the public good. Again, the satisfaction of Christ is only a satisfaction to the well-being of the Universe. And, finally, God was under no obligation to accept this atonement, tho the greatest public good required him to do so, and thus obligated him.

These sermons do not appear to bring out the new theory of the atonement to our fullest satisfaction. We do, of course, see God represented as the "Ruler" rather than the "offended Party", but for better treatment of this subject we must wait for the views of succeeding theologians, which is only natural, since a process of thought cannot complete itself in one man. For a somewhat fuller view, let us briefly glance at Stephen West's Scripture Doctrine of the Atonement, which was written about this time.

West ascribes not only the atonement but also the creation to the character of God as its foundation. The object of God in creating the world was to manifest and display his infinitely holy character. Since this character is holy and good, God's works can only manifest themselves in doing good. So then this design, namely to do good, is the refrain closing each chapter of this vast Universe. If we will not admit this, then our confession must be that either God has changed his mind, or the Universe has become too great and unwieldy for him to handle. This is absurd. We must all have confidence in God; and our confidence is regulated by our belief in or apprehensions of God's regard for the general good. To pass on to the atonement, we might say that the only purpose of the death of Christ was to exhibit God's love for righteousness, and not his hatred of iniquity. God is motivated purely by love and benevolence to all hiscreatures. In other words, West maintains, that it is the love of God for his creatures that lead him for their sake not to forgive without the atonement.

The continuation of this theory of the atonement in the works of Emmons and Taylor will be discussed when we take up the works of these men in particular. We must first finish this subject of Universalism.

The treatise which Dr. Chauncy published in 1784 on the Salvation for all Men was, as noted above, the principle factor in directing the trend of discussion toward questions of eschatology and atonement. The argument of this paper was based on the goodness of God, who, because of his very nature, must have as his one goal the universal happiness of mankind. This argument is purely rational and it might be said that the reply of New England divines was also one based on reason. Whether the latter had any hopes of completely obliterating this new tendency intheir midst, is hardly possible. At any rate, it was not done and the movement continued to spread, founding churches here and there, which continue even to the present day. The opposition of Edwards and other did, however, have its effect, for neither was this divergence embraced by the evangelical theology, nor did it continue its rapid growth. This was probably due to the fact that this entire movement soon became Unitarian in its theology, a trend of thought which will not be discussed in this paper.

It might be of interest to note the general line of argument which Universalists followed in their attempt to show that all men will finally be saved. For this purpose we have the Treatise on Atonement by Hosea Ballou, a man who wielded perhaps the greatest influence in bringing about the transfer fromthe Trinitarian to the Unitarian basis. His treatise on Atonement begins quite naturally with a definition of sin:—

> "Sin is the violation of a law which exists in the mind, which law is the imperfect knowledge which men have of the moral good." (g).

Sin is merely a finite evil, inasmuchas it depends upon the capacity of man to understand. This is in direct opposition to Edwards, for it eliminates

(g) Ballou, Treatise, p. 41.

the idea of an obligation which we have towards God. We shall soon see that this involves an absolute denial of all Freedom of the Will, resolving itself altogether into the notion of determinism. The origin of sin, Ballou says, is in the plan of God, and not in the Free Will which man possesses. He does not admit that God is the author of sin, claiming only that he is the author of what is in a limited sense sin. But since he teaches the universal salvation of all men; and since this is based on the fact that all of God's plans will be carried out; he must admit that man cannot of his own free will either persist in sin or free himself of it. What is this, but ascribing to God absolute authority, and making him the author also of sin?

Ballou's view of the atonement brings out very decidedly his trend toward Unitarianism. He does not admit that Christ is God, and regarding the notion of the Trinity he says:--

> "If the Godhead consists of three distinct persons, and each of these persons be infinite, the whole Godhead amounts to the amazing sum of infinity multiplied by three." (h).

So then, in the work of the Atonement, the dignity of Christ must be decidedly diminished. The fall of man produced a double error in the mind of Adam. In the first place, he believed God to be his enemy; and in the second place, he believed that he could reconcile himself to God by good works. But God continued to love man; he is not the injured party. In order to correct these two false views in the mind of man, the atonement was necessary. God's love is thus manifested toward us, causing us to love him. In this system there is no room for the death of Christ as an all-sufficient sacrifice and his shedding of blood as the washing away of our sins. The consequence of the atonement, in Ballou's estimation, is the universal happiness and holiness of the race.

Now then, he proceeds with a group of arguments for universal salvation and he first answers a number of objections and then gives the reasons for

(h) Ibid. p. 134.

believing in universal salvation. Some of the objections are briefly as follows:

In Rev. 14,10.11 we read that the idolater "shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels." Ballou says this does not refer to eternal punishment, for the present time is the period of punishment. And if some object that the millions who go out of this world unreconciled will remain so to all eternity,the answer is that this implies that there will be no change after death, which supposition is absurd. Again, the word 'everlasting' does not mean endless. Still again, the 'day of judgment' is the destruction of Jerusalem.

From these the author proceeds to his reasons for believing in universal salvation. We shall merely state the reasons without elaboration. They are: The goodness of God, with which we are familiar; the immortal desire of everyone for happiness; the principle of sympathy, by which all are miserable and by which all mutually desire happiness; and, finally, the proofs from Scripture. These are misinterpretations thruout. E.G., Gen. 12,3: "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," which of course refers to the temporal and spiritual blessings promised to the Jews, the latter being especially this, that the Messiah was to be born of the seed of Abraham, thru whom nations shall be blessed. By no means does it refer to the salvation of all souls.

Regarding this treatise, it can well be stated that it did not arouse much of a stir in New England. The fact of the matter was, that this tendency was rapidly identifying itself with the current Unitarianism,and so long as this process continued, there was no need of refuting each separately. Furthermore, Ballou's method of attack, as well as that of other Universalist defenders, was marked by vulgarity of the cheapest sort, which naturally excited disgust and did more harm to their influence that the counter-attacks of opponents. The most formidable antagonist, Moses Stuart,

might be mentioned, in the first place, for showing that, in his sincere opinion, there was no text of Scripture which favored the idea of a future probation; and in the second place, for his temperate and fair considerations of the terms: Sheol, Hades, Tartarus, and Gehenna. These places are all significant of the place of future and endless punishment.

With this treatise the Universalist controversy on the side of New England divines came to a close. The dogmatic and exegetical replies had now been made, and there was nothing for New England to do but to watch this notionof Universalism gradually pale into indignificance,or, as has already been stated, pass over into Unitarianism.

This discussion has taken us well into the 19th century, so let us leave the battle field of open controversy for a short time, and retrace our steps to the beginning of this century, in order to see if we can find something else in the nature of a System of Theology, whichis the product, not of public debate, but of much deep thinking on the part of some laborious professor or obscure minister in the quiet of a retired atudy. The work which comes to our attention is that of Nathaniel Emmons. It is not clearly a system, since it was not written as such by the author. It has been compiled from sermons which were written in connectionwith the work of Emmons as a pastor. Since Emmons and Hopkins are in agreement on most points, it will not be necessary to discuss this system at length. This agreement, however, is not absolute. Even where they agree, Emmons displays a remarkable originality and individuality of thought.

Emmons was at the height of his power inthe latter part of the 18th century, at a time when the theological atmosphere was seething withtrouble. Infidel tendencies, Antinomianism, and Universalism had been treated successively by theologians,among whom Emmons was not the least. In this paper he is going to be treated rather briefly for two reasons: The first has been

mentioned -- his agreement with Hopkins on so many points; the second reason is this: Since the writer has been unsuccesful in getting any of Emmons' works, he will have to confine himself to Park's Article on Emmons in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia on Religious Knowledge. The views of Emmons on Original Sin and Justification will be treated here.

The term, Original Sin, in Emmons Theology is used in a decidedly restricted sense, i.e., inasmushas Adam is the original sinner, he must be looked upon as tho only person who has ever possessed Original Sin. All acts of man, including acts of sin, are "free voluntary exercises". (1). Even tho these are described as free and volunhary, nevertheless, Emmons belonged to the school which believed that God 'created' our volitions. He is somewhat confused on this point, stating both views withequal power. Without a doubt, he is still much influenced by Edwards "continuous series of creative acts." The important thing here, however, is that fact that sin consists in "exercises". This altogether excludes the idea that our entire nature is corrupt and that the guilt of Adam has been imputed to us. In this point Emmons is clear and positive, more so than other theologians of this period. Sin, Emmons says, is hating God. As long as man hates God, he will have no desire to attain to his holiness. So then man must be given a new taste before he can begin to seek God's holiness. On the other hand, man is not unable to repent before this change in his will takes place. Were he, then he would be relieved of all moral obligations. No, man has the natural ability to be holy. This is the second distinctive feature of Emmons' theology as listed by Schaff-Herzog: "Men act freely under the divine agency." We are dependent upon God, of course. But He does permit us free activity under this agency. If God works in us both to will and to do, thenwe have the power to do right as well as to do wrong.

(1) Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia, p. 121.

As for Justification we have the following:--

"God exercises mere grace in pardoning or justifying penitent believers thru the atonement of Christ, and mere goodness for rewarding them for their good works". (j).

This is a clearer presentation than Hopkins. Emmons evidently doesn't admit that sin is a debt and could only be paid by the shedding of innocent blood. He seems to feel that Christ's coming into the world was merely an example of the grace of God, which He is going to show toward the elect later on. Justification is an act of absolute grace and those sinners whose hearts have been changed to love God, will be rewarded for the good works they do. This reward is eternal salvation. Here again, God is represented, not as the offended party, but as the governor, who gives his grace to whomever he wishes.

Let us give a brief summary of the view of atonement generally held, and also a summary showing the evident modifications of Edwards' theory of the Will.

Since the basis of the atonement in this new governmental theory of the atonement is an ethical one (k), we then have to deal primarily with the Election and see what relation it bears to the atonement. From the first, New England divines had taught a limited atonement, tho advocates of a general atonement had long since made their influence felt. After such men as Dr. Edwards, West, and Emmons had had their say, the great treatise on this subject appeared, written by Dr. Edwards D. Griffin. What purpose did Griffin essay to carry out in writing this treatise? If we understand the general trend of New England thought on this question, then we will also understand Griffin's purpose. The argument harks back to the old one on the freedom of the will. We hardly need to recall the position of strict Necessitarianism which Edwards had taken. The fact that he provided only for a sort of external freedom of man to do as he wished, but not for actual freedom of the will, was

(j) Ibid. p.121.
(k) "Conception of the character of God as Love." -- Foster, p.215.

felt by Samuel Hopkins, who brought forward the notion that freedom was the natural right of the will, which is shown by freedom in the use of volitions. Emmons had maintained that God produces our volitions by presenting motives. But by some mysterious connection, manacts as tho God did not; he acts freely.

These are the main features so far. Now it is Griffin's purpose to harmonize divine and human operations inthe matter of volitions. He presents the issue: If men are both passive receivers and moral agents, how can these two paradoxical statements stand side by side? Griffin believed that the big mistake of most men debating this question, had been this, that they confused these two characters. He says:--

> "They are about as distinct as body and soul; and on this marked separation the solution of almost every difficulty in metaphysical theology depends." (l).

He continues later:--

> "Now the great truth to be proved is, that these two characters of men are altogether distinct and independent of each other. And the proof is found in the single fact, that their moral agency is in no degree impaired or effected by their dependence and passiveness, nor their passiveness and dependence by their moral agency. -------. For instance, they are none the less bound to believe because faith is the 'gift of God', nor to love because love is the 'fruit of the Spirit'. Their obligations rest upontheir capacity to exercise, not on their power to originate; on their being rational, not on their being independent." (m).

God can maintain two characters independent of each other. In relation to the moral agent, he is the moral governor; in relation to the passive receiver, he is the Sole Efficient Cause. Now, the atonement was made for moral agents and such an atonement "could know nothing of passive regeneration or any degree concerning it." (n).

These views are in reality the sum of all New England divines on this question. Now for a moment on the elements rejected by these men. There are chiefly two. The one is the doctrine of Imputation. The question concerns

(l) Park's Discourses and Treatises, p. 252f.
(m) Ibid. p. 264f.
(n) Ibid. p. 273.

itself with the idea that Christ's suffering equals our punishment and that Adam's sin is imputed to us. As for the latter, it was not believed that Adam's sin was directly imputed to all mankind. We note intense struggles going on in the minds of these divines in an endeavour to find a plausible theory for the adoption of the idea that all men must bear Adam's guilt. Such theories of identity and divine constitution are called forth to show is that we are one with Adam, and yet must first consent to his sin before we become guilty of it. It was the Universalist controversy that stampled out all endeavours in the direction of solving this difficulty. But the Universalists went to the other extreme, namely, that there is no grace in saving men; that Christ's ~~merits~~ merits are directly imputed, and that on this account sinners can claim forgiveness of their sins. This is the second element that was rejected by New England divinity. Representatives spent pages showing that there was no inconsistency between atonement and the exercise of grace.

We have now completed our discussion of the doctrine of atonement, for it has been brought to the stage at which it has remained in New England Theology. We will, therefore, continue with our study of the development of the Freedom of the Will. We have noted the contributions of the elder Edwards, Bellamy, Hopkins, and Emmons, which brings us approximately to the year 1795. Let us continue with the modifications of Edwards view.

We, of course, know that Edwards' theories were not universally accepted, neither by the men we have already considered, nor by those who are yet before us. Since Edwards ascribed all actions to one efficient cause, God, therefore, the new school now claimed that even sinful volitions must in Edwards' mind be ascribed to God. This was vigorously objected to, and chiefly by the Rev. James Dana, who went into this matter in his Examination. But. he comes to no conclusion, for he says the question, What determines the Will?

"is unanswered and yet returns." (o).

And now Stephen West takes up the controversy with Dana by publishing an Essay on Moral Agency. This is distinctly Edwardean, tho differing with the latter on minor points. But in the relation of power to moral agency, he agrees absolutely. "Power, strictly speaking, is no more than a law of constant divine operation." (p).

But we are seeking differences. What is West's distinct contribution to the thinking of the school? It seems to be this, that moral agency consists in exercises, and that these are the actions of the deity as the sole efficient cause. To use the phrasology of West:--

> "Motives are not the causes of volitions. When we are inquiring into the sources of things ----- we are compelled toresolve all into the divine disposal ..... of constant divine agency and operation." (q)

Edwards' doctrine was further attacked by Samuel West. He maintained that the certainty of future events does not involve their necessity. He says in effect, if thedeity is uncaused, then the knowledge he has, also has no cause. So then the idea of necessity cannot be implied.

Thus we see the Arminian idea of absolute freedom of the will continually attempting to gain a position of prominence. But, of course, the advocates of Old Calvinism are always on hand to stamp down any such uprising as a heresy. Now we have the Younger Edwards coming forward to defend his father in his Dissertation Concerning Liberty and Necessity. His reply to Samuel West failed inasmuch as he did not answer the question, What freedom do human agents have that renders themresponsible? Rather, he turns to West's argument against causative power of motives, endeavouring to show, like his father, that "motives are the occasion, reason or previous circumstance necessary for volitions. (r). Motives, however, are not the efficient cause.

(o) James Dana, Examination, p. 29.
(p) Stephen West, Essay on Moral Agency, p. 48.
(q) Ibid. p. 66.
(r) Dr. Edwards, Dissertation Concerning Liberty and Necessity, p. 344.

Here the son is true to the father, but he goes farther. He attempts to banish efficient cause from the universe, and in this attempt, he evidently runs into utter confusion of thought, as is shown by the following two statements:--

> "The deity if no more the efficient cause of his own volitions than he is of his own existence." (s).
>
> "God,however, is the efficient cause of our volition." (t)

Thus we see the struggle going on. These new views were granted a hearing because they did not openly break with the doctrine of Necessity. Up to this point the evident object of this rigid Calvinistic Theology was to reduce men to mere machines on the stage of life. But it remained for an obscure country minister to set this new undercurrent of partial freedom in motion toward a doctrine of absolute freedom. We come to a discussion of Asa Burton's Essays on some of the First Principles of Metaphysics, Ethics, and Theology.

Burton presented a new element in the matter of the will, inasmuch as he divided the mind into three faculties, instead of two, as had formerly been done. The three divisions are: The Understanding, the Heart, and the Will. The first presents nothing new, but the latter two are now distinguished, where they had formerly beenidentified. The "heart" he classifies under "sensibility" or "taste", declaring that this taste is the cause of the will. He defines it as

> "That preparedness, adoptedness, or disposition of the mind by which the mins is effected agreeably or disagreeably when objects are presented to it." (u).

Now as to his definitionof liberty, he maintains that liberty does not consist in volition. We want to do many things, but whether we can do them is another question. This brings out Burton's distinction between liberty

(s) Ibid. p. 425.
(t) Loc. cit. p. 425.
(u) Burton, Essays etc. p. 54.

of will and liberty of action. The former everyone has, for we can choose what we wish; but of the latter we may be deprived, since we cannot always act according to our wishes. Bu ascribing to everyone liberty of the will, Burton has gotten away fromhalf of Edwards's Necessitarianism. But the latter still keeps him inthe toils of this old doctrine. By drawing this three-fold distinction of the faculties of the mind, he has cleared up some of the minor errors of his predecessors, such as, for example, the notion of Hopkins that freedom consists in voluntariness. But even this new distinction keeps the will necessitated by its dependence upon the taste. This distinction has, however, opened a new field in which theological thinkers of the future could direct their efforts and ultimately attain freedom in its true form. Did they do it? The struggle continued, but evidently the clearest thinkers could not attain to a clearness of shatement. This question remains the crux of New England Theology.

Chapter 4 -- THE PROCESS OF THOUGHT WELL DEVELOPED UNDER NATHANIEL W. TAYLOR.

To continue the development of the theory of the will is the object of this chapter, but we assign a separate section to Taylor due to the influential position which he held, and also due to the new phase of thought subsequently known as Tayloriam which he developed. We ask why his theology must receive a special name, if he represents merely another stage in the development of theological thought. The answer is easy to find. The Unitarian controversy occupied his chief attention, and in order to bring to light the fallacy of Unitarian reasoning, he made a special effort to acquaint himself with the whole subject of Anthropology. The points of view which he brought to the foreground were takne by his theological brethren as being "new innovations", and they promptly dubbed his theology, Taylorism. His disagreement with Edwards, which to us who are living a century later is apparent, was to him not so apparent. No doubt he felt that he was in full agreement with the great leader, and really thought that he was only expressing Edwards's meaning in a clearer way.

In the course of his theological labors he became engaged in three controversies, the first two bwing of little impwrtaince -- we will only note them --, while the last must be considered more carefully. They were started by the famous sermon, Concio ad Clerum, delivered in New Haven in 1828. The sermon deals with moral depravity. Moral depravity is sinfulness, but it is not our natural repetition of Adam's act, nor is it merely a tendency to sin, which is the cause of all actual sin; rather, it is man's own act, consisting in a free choice of some object rather than God, as his chief good. In this way man sinned. In another of his works (v) Taylor clearly brings out the notion that this act of sinning is entirely up to man

(v) Moral Government.

himself. As a matter of fact, he goes so far as to say that free moral agents can sin under every possible influence from God to prevent their sinning. The notion that God could not prevent sin in the present moral system is, of course, a thrust at Hopkins' theory that sin is the necessary means to the greatest good. It must be understood that Taylor did not wish to derogate the power and dignity of God. He merely meant to say that a moral agent ceases to be a moral agent as soon as the freedom to do either good or evil is taken from him. If God deemed it wise to make men moral agent -- which he did -- then all men must possess the power to determine their own choice. In this sense does Taylor mean that God could not prevent sin.

This new note of freedom which was here struck occasioned the controversies which have already been alluded to.

The first is that with Joseph Harvey, pastor of the church at Westchester, Conn. He reviewed Taylor's Concio ad Clerum in 1829, attacking Taylor's notion of freedom by attempting to show that it involves an effect without a cause. This is essentially the Edwardean infinite series of causes. He can't get away from it, and consequently accuses Taylor of Arminianism. He, of course, didn't understand this new idea of freedom, and we do not find that this controversy bore any influence on the thinking of the school.

The second controversy was with Dr. Leonard Woods of Andover. This gentleman took a position midway between Hopkins "sin is the means to the greatest good" and Taylor's idea that man sinned of his own free will. He got himself out of the difficulty by saying that the existence of sin is a mystery. He failed to understand Taylor on the latter's view of the permission of sin. When Taylor said that in the present moral system God could not prevent sin, Woods interpreted this as meaning that God had no power to prevent sin. This argument also added little to New England thought. But now we come to the one whose effect was far more lasting than the other two had been. This was the controversy with Dr. Benet Tyler.

The thing really started with discussion as to the proper use of the "means" of regeneration. This question had always been agitated in New England theology. The question was finally brought to the point where the use of means was rejected, since the unregenerate can only make an insincere and improper use of them. Such a use will be of no effect, and will not produce regeneration. Why then use them at all? To bring about the right understanding of the use and true purpose of the means of regeneration was Taylor's object in the Spectator of 1830. He tried to show that there was in man a certain desire for holiness, which would make him consider any motives that might lead him to realize this desire. Such was the nature of Taylor's contribution to the theory of the will. Since man is by nature extremely selfish, he will naturally choose anything that will satisfy his passions and appetites. These desires are to the natural man altogether unholy. But if by the operation of the Holy Ghost holy desires are presented to him, he will grasp them as the greatest good and thus be regenerated.

To this point of view Dr. Tyler took decided exception. He did not fully understand Taylor. He believed that the question was not regarding the means of regeneration, but regarding the acts which the unregenerate man perfomms before regeneration. He evidently understood Taylor to say that these acts brought about regeneration. Thus he accuses his opponent of Arminianism. The latter at once replied in the Spectator. The main question to be decided was: What is a free moral agent? The point is not whether God's act is included, but whether man's act is excluded. He accuses Tyler of maintaining that the gospel is of no effect, that it presents no motives to the heart of the unregenerate.

Thus the thing went on for a period of some eight years. It might be said that an agreement was never effected. We present a few features of the debate.

In subsequent months, as the debate carried on, Dr. Taylor merely reaffirmed his opinion, namely,

> "his belief in election, in total depravity, in the necessity of the atonement, in the moral character of the change called conversion and in its production by the Holy Spirit thru the truth, in special grace, and in the perseverance of the saints." (w).

Tyler, on the other hand, could not appreciate the new views and it must be said that he remained strictly Edwardean to the last.

Taylor continued the student, and his chief production, Moral Government merits our attention. His definition of moral government is a system in which a moral governor controls the action os moralbeings inthe capacity of authority. In this system of government, the subject of the prevention of sin has made anessentialadvance. Is the existance of sin inconsistent with divine benevolence? Divine benevolence is the disposition to produce the greatest amount of happiness possible. If this disposition has been carried out, then we are now living in the best possible world. Now at this point Taylor differs from Hopkins. He does not claim that sin is the means to the greatest good. Rather, he says that more good would be present without sin; but sin entered the world by the free act of morals agents. Because man acted freely, the divine benevolence is, therefore, not impugned.

Since Taylor made such a decided advance in the theory of freedom, and since he willingly admitted the great mystery of the existence of sin, he must be granted a high position in throlgical thought. The writer regrets that he could get none of the works of Taylor, which necessarily confined the remarks of this section to the chapter devoted to this great thinker in Foster's History of the New England Theology. We proceed to a discussion of the Later New Haven Theology.

(w) Foster, Hist. of the N.E. Theology, p. 391.

Chapter 5 -- THE LATER NEW HAVEN THEOLOGY.

This form of theology emanating under the influence of Dwight and Taylor inconnection with the Divinity School of Yale College, occupies somewhat of a central position between the Old and New School Theology, the latter bearing the earmarks of Unitarian influence. True, its advocates did not consciously establish what they called a compromise between the two mentioned trends of thought. The fact of the matter, however, is that the Rationalism and Unitarianism of the day was making itself felt; and could not be discarded without serious inroads in the theology of the Old School. Its chief advocate, Horace Bushnell, sums up the situation rather nicely in his 20th anniversary sermon preached at Hartford, Conn., May. 22, 1853. His words follow:

> "Accordingly, the effect of my preaching never was to overthrow one school and set up the other; neither was it to find a position of neutrality midway between them; but, as far as theology is concerned, it was to comprehend, if possible, the truth contended for in both..... ..... The two parties heard me, as it were, across the fence, and the amin question appeared for a long time to be, not what I was teaching but on which side I was. If I preached a sermon, for example, that turned more especially on the absolute dependence of sinner ..... the Old School hearers ..... seemed to say: 'We have him with us'. If I preached a sermon that called to action, asserting a compete power, under God, to cast off sin and be renewed in righteousness, my New School hearers were sure that it was right." (x).

This, in brief, is the situation in which Horace Bushnell found himself. As the chief exponent of the so-called New Haven Theology, the man merits our further attention. Tho not openly breaking with the tenets of older New England Theology, nevertheless, we have at least two phases presented in a modified form.

Horace Bushnell was born on the 14th of April, 1802, in Litchfield, Conn. It might be stated at the outset that later in life he became one of the most eloquent of preachers, and I suppose the most fondly loved pastor, not only in New England but in the entire country. His youth was one of rigid

(x) Life and Letters of Horace Bushnell, pp. 280-281.

discipline and simplicity of life. These features are not the contributing factors to his remarkable genius; were this so, then many a son of New England would have the same legitimate claim to fame that was justly his. Genius is an inherent quality, not acquired, and Bushnell was a genius. It has been stated that, had he chosen any profession whatever, he would have made original and remarkable contributions to any of them, for he was one of the most versatile of men. Naturally, the talents which he possessed, displayed themselves early in youth, and no doubt the first to notice them were his parents. Of course, Horace must go to school, but since the family coffers were constantly in a depleted condition, that seemed out of the question. Finally, however, a way was found. By special economizing, Horace could be permitted to go to school, provided he would agree to cover all expenses of his senior year himself. This agreed, he set out for New Haven in September, 1823, and enrolled at Yale College at the age of 21. Here his native genius developed rapidly and brilliantly, and when 4 years later, he graduated with high honors, he had no difficulty whatever in obtaining a position, first as school teacher in Norwich, Conn., and later as tutor at Yale.

He had been sent to Yale with the express purpose of studying for the office of the holy ministry, but a multitude of doubts and misgivings as to his faith, led him to postpone his entry into this office. This was a tremendous disappointment to his parents, and we can well imagine the many sincere prayers that were offered to the throne of God from this humble little cottage in Litchfield. And when the conversion of Horace was effected during his tutorship at Yale, we are led to believe that the parental prayers were not in vain.

Thus in the Fall of 1831, he entered the Yale Divinity School, which at this time was under the leadership of Dr. Taylor. Here he came directly under the influence of the new trend in the theology of New England, which has

already been referred to. And when he later accepted the pastorate of the North Church in Hartford, he was thrown into the thick of the fight. This church marked the dividing lines between the two schools of thought. It has beensaid that even the two leading deacons opposed each other on every point in dispute.

It has been stated elsewhere in this paper that controversy is one of the finest stimulants to thought. Perhaps this helped Bushnell. At any rate, a large part of his crowded life was devoted to hard thought. To this there were two contributing factors: His natural scepticism, and the peculiar position which he occupied/ He had many difficult problems to <u>think</u> thru, and while he apparently accomplished them to his satisfaction, we shall presently see that his conception of the problems which he faced were not Scriptural. The fact that he did not possess the mind of the dogmatician, no doubt, increased his difficulties. However, he was and remained the preacher <u>par excellence</u>. His preaching possessed "a fiery quality, an energy and wilful force, which, in his later style, is still felt in the more subdued glow of poetic imagery." (y) It was as a preacher that he gained his nationwide reputation; not the brilliant and dashing orator with nothing to say, but, as everyone soon discovered,

> "he seemed to stand as a prophet, directing his audiences to things unseen and real. ..... Truth, independence, humanity, under an overpowering faith in God and Christ, were the principles stamped then into the youthful minds by the preaching and life of Dr. Bushnell." (z).

It is natural to suppose that since the Unitarian influence was being so largely felt in New England at this time, Bushnell's chief discussions would be devoted to the subject of the Trinity and the Divnity of Christ. In this supposition we are right.

(y) Life and Letters, p. 79.
(z) Ibid. p. 80.

The former was quite beyond his understanding. He wrestled with the subject for many years and evidently could not bring himself to the conviction that there were three persons of the Godhead in one Divine Essence. He merely speaks of a Trinity of revelation, whose purpose it is to reveal God's love, power, and presence. We are not to carry on any further investigations, but accept the Trinity merely as that revelation of God's love which sets the whole world in a glow. This is quite indefinite and shows Bushnell's own sorry attempt to reason the unfathomable depths of the Godhead.

As for the Divinity of Christ, he did not deny the human soul, nor the two natures, but he did deny the distinct subsistence of these natures. To imagine a portion of Christ being capable of suffering, while the other portion was true God, was to him utterly unreasonable. Against the Unitarians he insisted on the Divinity of Christ, but in his discussion he purposed to show that Christ entered humanity so that he might sympathetically learn to know our lot. His was essentially a gospel of social service. To his daughter he wrote in Jan. 1848: "Unite yourself to Christ for life, and try to receive his beautiful and loving spirit." (a). The fuller meaning of his conception was embodied in a sermon on "Christ the form of the Soul".

> "The very title of this sermon expresses his spiritually illuminated conception of Christ, as the indwelling, formative life of the soul." (b)

Or as he later says:--

> "Christ is a manifestation in humanity of the Eternal Life of the Father, entering into a prison world to set its soul-captives free; by incarnate charities and sufferings, to re - engage the world's love and reunite it to the Father." (c).

He did, however, save for orthodoxy Christ's true consubstantial humanity, which, due to the reaction to Unitarianism, was being denied or negledted in orthodox circles. We must remember that Bushnell had never

(a) Life and Letters, p. 189.
(b) Ibid. p. 192.
(c) Ibid. p. 197.

ceased to consider himself orthodox according to the ancient standards; in fact, that he felt it to be his mission to rescue certain important truths of orthodoxy from the mire into which it had fallen. In spite of this, however, from the Scriptural point of view Bushnell must always be considered a substantial rationalist. He, in the first place, never found himself in serious conflict with the Unitarians, for we read the following in a letter to C.A. Bartol written in July, 1847:--

> "I consider myself to be an orthodox man, and yet I think I can state my orthodox faith in such a way that no serious Unitarian will conflict with me, or feel that I am beyond the terms of reason." (d).

That's just the point. If he had gotten beyond the "terms of reason", then he may have been able to interpret the Scripture doctrine of the Trinity correctly. The danger of Tritheism, into which he was also afraid of falling, would have been obviated had he been willing to submerge his reason to the teaching of Holy Scripture.

His greatest contribution to the theology of New England was made to the doctrine of the Atonement. Judging by what we have said so far, we are hardly justified in speaking of his work in this direction as a contribution. Rather, he impoverished the Scripture doctrine. But we must look at this from a different viewpoint, namely, that of New England theology, which had never held the true Scriptural position on the Atonement. In this sense, then, we speak of the <u>contribution</u> which Bushnell made.

He objected to the current view as being a derogation of the justice and goodness of God. He shows that there is a double ignominy involved, that of letting the guilty go free, and that of accepting the sufferings of the innocent. Now this latter view would be Scriptural were it not for the fact that the governmental theory was deeply ingrained in the thinking of the Old School. This theory, to state it again, looks upon God as the supreme

(d) Life and Letters p. 184.

Justice, not as the offended party, and parallels the transaction to that of any human court. Now just as no judge would consciously neither permit a guilty party to go free, nor accept the sufferings of an innocent person as payment of the debt which the guilty party owes to society, just so, says Bushnell, is it unreasonable to suppose that God would act in such an unjust manner.

We have alluded to the error into which Bushnell fell. Had he been sufficiently clear on the Scriptural statements as to the atonement, he would not have objected to this so-called double ignominy, but would instead have confined his objections to the governmental theory. As a matter of fact, the Bible does teach this "double ignominy". God has accepted the all-sufficient sacrifice of his innocent Son, and imputed his righteousness to us who are laden with sin and guilt, thus declaring us free from the sin which we could not atone.

What did Bushnell offer in substitution? Simply this, that God, out of love for man who was helpless in the bonds of sin, sent his Son into the world, so that he might enter sympathetically into our lot, strengthen us morally so that we can turn from sin, and teach us to love him as our friend and Saviour and thus do his commandments. True, this view enriched the humanity of Christ in these trying times of the struggle with Unitarianism, when the tendency of the Old School was to lay too much stress on the Divinity of Christ. But at the same time, had Bushnell only seen that Christ's obedience was one "unto death", and that as such it cannot be imitated, but rather defies imitation -- had he understood this clearly, he could not have been accused of impoverishing the Scripture doctrine of Atonement.

The question now before us is this: Will the new be assimilated with the old, or will the old be abandoned? The new theory, we understand, makes a decided advance on our old question of the Freedom of the Will. To remain

true to the statement made earlier in this paper that we would trace the development of this doctrine to one of freedom and Perfectionism, we are tempted to say that the new was adopted in preference to the old. This we find to be the case, at least in that phase o f New England Theology which now comes to our attention, forming the last chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 6 -- THE OBERLIN SCHOOL.

This particular form of theology is only one product of the widespread intellectual revival that marked the decade from 1830-40 in America. During a period when inventions and discoveries were revolutionizing the industrial world, it is quite natural to suppose that this spirit would be contagious and would in consequence be carried to every phase of thinking. And so modifications and changes were introduced into the field of religion. Sects of every description sprang up like mushrooms and gained more or less headway. The idea was that a "perishing world" was felt to be in need of a new spirituality. One such contribution was the Oberlin Theology, which constituted perhaps the most lasting contribution to Reformed Theology.

Due to the widespread fame of some of the later leaders of this school, it must be admitted that its founder necessarily pales into insignificance. He will, of course, come in for his share of consideration here in connection with the early history of the School.

There were really two founders: John J. Shipherd and Philo P. Stewart. These two gentlemen, "without liberal education, unendowed with more than ordinary intellectual gifts" (e) one day met by appointment in Elyria, Ohio, in order to discuss plans for founding a school or society which would bring much spiritual benefit to a perishing world. The plan was this: A colony of Christian families was to be founded, dedicating themselves and all their possessions to the furtherance of the kingdom of God. In addition, a school was to be founded at which everyone was to be admitted irrespective of sex or color. A suitable location must be found; and after diligent inquiry and search, a section in Lorrain County was decided on, which today bears the name, Oberlin, after a famous pastor in the Steinthal, Germany. The tree

(e) D.L. Leonard, The Story of Oberlin, p. 20.

under which the founders gathered, knelt in prayer, and fixed definitely this spot as the location of their colony, stands today on the campus of Oberlin College, and is known as the Historic Elm.

After getting due possession of the land, putting up the first building, founding a Congregational Church, and in general succeeding in accomplishing the most difficult of the pioneer work, there yet remained a big task to be accomplished. The growth of this little colony was most encouraging, so much so in fact, that it became urgently necessary to get a pastor for the church as well as a president for the College, or Institute, as it was then called. This necessity became apparent after but two years of work. Accordingly Mr. Shipherd set out for the East to find a president for his college. In this search he was most successful. It so happened that at Cincinnati, Lane Theological Seminary had a few years before been established under the leadership of the Rev. Lyman Beecher. At this school Shipherd found his president. The school was threatened with disruption on the slavery question, and, to his joy, Shipherd found that the Rev. Asa Mahan, together with a large number of students, were willing to go to Oberlin. However, more teaching strength was necessary as well as a sounder financial basis. With the purpose of making the desired addition and adjustment, Shipherd and Mahan set out for New York, where the search again was rewarded. Charles G. Finney, with whom we will presently have more to do, and who was at this time in charge of Broadway Tabernacle, expressed his willingness to accompany the two to Oberlin. Financial help was found in the person of Arthur Tappan, a man full of public spirit and possessed of abundant means. He guaranteed the endowment of eight professorships, and added a loan sufficient to build a theological hall.

With such extreme good fortune and good news to carry back to their friends in Ohio, the three men returned to Oberlin and went to work with vigor. Tho the young colony in subsequent years was forced to contend with

difficulties in the form of much opposition, especially to its views on slavery, and its later peculiar views on sanctification, nevertheless it enjoyed a phenomenal growth, and always exercised a remarkable influence on the theological thought of the Calvinistic church bodies of America. Much of this influence was no doubt due to its remarkable leaders, whose teachings we wish to review briefly, with special attention to the theology of Finney.

The Oberlin theologians were completely carried along by the Revival tide of those days. Conversions were made by the hundreds, and a pastor's success could almost be measured by the number of conversions he was responsible for. Asa Mahan early became convinced that a general revival of religion was necessary, first, because of the open opposition to religion; and second, because of the indifference to the interest of souls on the part of professors of Christianity. Imbued with this conviction, he, as well as his co-workers, opened extensive revival campaigns, and thousands of conversions were reported to have been made in the following decade. But it had to be admitted that most of these were swept along with the current; actual converts were few. Casting about for a reason, Mahan and Finney came to the conclusion that these converts had only been brought into a traditional Christianity, and not into perfectionism. Here we have the first indication of the doctrine which was to characterize Oberlin theology. The idea that man could become perfect in the knowledge of the law was the ideal striven for, and this was essentially Pelagianism. This thing was driven like a hurricane thru the churches. The question of obligation as to the degree of holiness which the christian might obtain was now raised everywhere. In the summer of 1836, a body of young men, associated in a missionary society and earnestly engaged upon their spiritual culture in preparation for their prospective work "rejected with decision the antinomian features of teachings they had found in the Putney literature; but, under its influence, they advanced, along the lines of the New Divinity common to it and themselves, to a full conviction of the duty and possibility of completely putting away sin. a fervid consecration

meeting was held by them, in which they solemnly bound themselves not to grieve their master by any further sinning." (f). An attempt to gain perfection in this life, then, was the essence of the Oberlin Theology.

Charles G. Finney began the publication of his theology in the form of Skeletons of a Course of Theological Lectures in 1840. Here we have his views on natural theology, the Scriptures, the Trinity, and Christology. These are, however, of minor importance in our discussion of the theology of Finney. The chief field in which he directed his efforts was that of the Freedom of the Will. We can well imagine that he was a strong opponent of a Necessitated Will. His whole theology was controlled by two fundamental purposes, namely, to make men Christians and to keep them so. His conception of the Plan of Salvation is briefly this: God foresaw that all mankind would fall from the state of holiness. He also saw that He could secure the return of a part of mankind. He resolved to do so and "chose them to eternal salvation, thru sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (g). This decree of God is not at all absolute, but it is altogether determined by the behaviour of His creatures. Man has the final say, whether he wants to be saved or not. The means which God chooses to use in order to carry our His designs are the Law, the Atonement, the publication of the Gospel, His moral government, and the 'gift of the Holy Spirit'. The last mentioned is perhaps the most important, for it is the Holy Spirit who excites in man the desire to be holy. This gift of the Spirit is a gift of grace. "Grace", we read, "Has made the salvation of every human being secure, who can be persuaded, by all the influences which God can wisely bring to bear upon him, to accept the offer of his salvation." (h).

The entire theology of Finney could really be dismissed with the one word "Taylorism". G.F. Wright in his Finney brings out the connection

(f) Prin. Theol. Rev. Vol. XIX, p. 49. -- "The Oberlin Perfectionism"
(g) Ibid. p. 568.
(h) Ibid. p. 569.

between these two men in many places. (i). We have already noted Taylor's important contribution to the theory of the Freedom of the Will, namely, that in the present moral system God could not prevent sin, and that man chooses sin because he thinks it is the way to the greatest good. In order to make him choose God as the greatest good, the Holy Spirit must be bestowed upon him, which will at once make man turn from the evil, and remove from him the defect of Original Sin. Prof. Wright seems to be thoroly acquainted with Finney's theology and he finds in it no essential disagreement with Taylor. I suppose the chief, if not the only advance which Finney made, was in the fact that he gained a greater following and could, as a result, carry out his ideas in a larger way. At any rate, his influence, as well as that of the entire Oberlin School, was felt, not only among the churches of the Western Reserve, but also among those of the state and even the entire country. Leonard expresses the influence of Oberlin on Congregationalism as follows:--

> "Great is the marvel that within a generation or two Congregationalism has had a far greater development and expansion than during a century or two preceding. And whoso would explain this significant phenomenon must not fail to make large account of the ideas and conviction, the spirit and life, whose origin was connected with the momentous experiment of that humble Elyria pastor, and whose unfolding was thru the men he began to gather in the little clearing in Northern Ohio."(j).

This, then, completes our brief study of Oberlin, as well as the entire field of New England Theology. Not that the Calvinism of America stopped with Oberlin. As a matter of fact, this is an arbitrary ending. But the purpose which we set out to accomplish has in some degree been accomplished. To rework this field more thoroly, and to continue the study of the modern Reformed Theology, will be an interesting field of endeavour to engage in, in subsequent years.

(i) pp. 25, 179, 181, 196, 200.
(j) D.L. Leonard, The Story of Oberlin, pp. 360-361.

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